**Worship Plan for Sunday, March 30, 2025** **\* Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**Introduction to the day**

The psalm sets the tone this day: “Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!” Happy are those who have “become the righteousness of God” in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has “rolled away . . . the disgrace” of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Rejoice!

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Getting to the Fat Calf**

Whatever you think of, however you feel about this story, don’t fool yourself into believing that it is all about a party. Pie-in-the-sky piety skims the fat and squeezes the fruit out of the parable, reducing a teaching about what is wildly prodigal to a mere morality play.

Here’s the bulk of the story: abandonment, longing, waste, famine, then hunger, humiliation, and dishonor, dying in pig dirt, shame unto pleading, resentment, sore bitterness . . . loss in every direction. Loss and falling—from comfort and certainty, respectability and character; from pleasure into pain, well-being into misery. Jesus told this agonizing, heartbreaking, undignified, lowdown, vanished-hope story for a reason. Jesus knew what life can be like. He recognized the deep ravines of loss and the gullies into which we fall. It doesn’t look as if the story begins in those sad places, but it surely lands and sits there for a while, the kind of sedentary existence that is too much like an awful eternity.

A father, bereaved and insulted (Was he not the parent he hoped, thought, intended himself to be?), is left gazing into an empty distance. A child disappearing (Why such urgency to run from his birth home?) is left in disgrace. A child dutiful, hard at work, utterly dependable (How had he come to feel so cheated, denied of love?) is left mucking in thick refusal.

And while it is so . . . And though it is true . . .

Suddenly, or maybe it’s eventually, the story becomes larger. The story collides with gospel. The late preacher and theologian Frederick Buechner observed, “The gospel is bad news before it is good news.” Jesus knew how we fail the world and how the world fails us. Jesus was a truth-teller, the whole truth: rags and robes, pigpen and dance floor, defiance and embrace, but no pie-in-the-sky piety. Instead, a festive roast in the oven! That’s how grace behaves.

**Processional**

**AM: Welcome**

Welcome to Faith Lutheran Church where grace and love abound. It’s a joy to be with you all this morning! A special welcome to those of you here for the first time, to those joining us online, and to our guest pastor, Pr. Shane Freiberg. During this season of Lent, we focus on our Savior’s journey to the cross and the supreme sacrifice he made there for all of us. As we follow the path Jesus walked, we trust in God’s faithfulness and guidance - in our continued search for a permanent pastor, and in all areas of our ministry to and for God’s people. Join in as we journey to the cross together. All are welcome!

**AM: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The altar flowers were provided by the Varsobias celebrating their wedding anniversary.

Today at 2:00 the Vagabond Theatre will hold their final performance of The Women of Lockerbie in the Fellowship Hall.

Our Lent Soup & Suppers are still happening! This Wednesday and every Wednesday during Lent, join us at 5:00 for Soup and Study...be fed in body and soul! Please sign up in the Narthex, but even if you don't sign up, ALL are welcome to attend!

Pr. Ken is still leading the Lenten Bible Study, Beyond Question, part of the ELCA Book of Faith series. It will continue every Thursday evening at 7:00 pm throughout Lent. Contact Pastor Ken at hopegiver@aol.com to join in.

For the month of March, we are collecting canned chili, grocery bags, and empty egg cartons for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in the wire basket in the foyer.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office.

**P: Silence**

Let us take a moment of silence to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

**P: Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**P: Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made,

**let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**AM: Please turn to hymn 592**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:*Just As I Am, Without One Plea* (ELW 592)**

**P: Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**P: Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

**God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

**Children's Chat**

**P: Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**Lector: First Reading:** Joshua 5:9-12

9 The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. 10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Psalmody:** Psalm 32

1 Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!

2 **Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

4 **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.” Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

6 **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

7 You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

8 **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.**

9 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you.”

10 **Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.**

11 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

**Amen.**

**Lector: Second Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Please stand for the gospel***

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 151)**

**Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

**P: Gospel:** Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” 3 So he told them this parable: 11b “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ’ 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. 25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ 31 Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**AM: Please turn to hymn 608**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day:*Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (ELW 608)**

**AM: Apostle's Creed**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

**Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

***Please be seated for the Prayers of Intercession***

**Pastor and Assisting Minister: Prayers of Intercession**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion, especially Lynn Bennett; Arnette Calkins; Sandy Chandler; Vicki Crow; Eleanor Diaz; Doris Hays; Sarge Hunter; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Jean Miles; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Esther Neumen; April Quinn; Marilyn Rieti; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery or tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**Amen.**

**P: Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**P: Offering**

Let us remember at this time of Offering, that all we have and all we are given are gifts from God. Our offerings of time, talent and treasures are expressions of gratitude to God for all we have received. May we show abundant gratitude.

**AM: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

***Please feel free to either listen to our musical offering or sing along***

**Musical Offering: *Amazing Grace/My Chains are Gone* (Chris Tomlin)**

**P: Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ELW p. 152)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**P: Preface (ELW p. 153)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy (all sing) (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**P: Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**P: INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God’s children are welcome to Christ’s table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you’ve received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**P: Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**During Distribution: *Let Us Break Bread Together* (ELW 471)**

***We Come to the Hungry Feast* (ELW 479)**

***Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**P: Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**AM: Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**P: Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**P: Please turn to hymn 774**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine* (ELW 774)**

**AM: Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Invitation**

The Church Council Members invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you. All are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall for cookies, coffee and conversation.

**THIS WEEK AT FAITH**

Monday, the 31st: Council meets at 1:00

Tuesday, April 1st: Worship & Music meets at 10:00

Wednesday, the 2nd: Lent Soup & Study begins at 5:00

Thursday, the 3rd: Snip 'N Stitch meets at 9:00; Pr. Ken's Lenten Zoom Bible Study begins at 7:00

Friday, the 4th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30

Sunday, the 6th: Worship begins at 9:30 with Pr. Rex

CCLI License #11573116

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.